

EXHIBIT G

2018 Difference Makers

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Civic Leadership Award: Judge Dan Aaron Polster

Nov 16, 2018



Joseph L. Pollack

Judge Dan Aaron Polster said from an early age that he learned ordinary people can do extraordinary things if they recognize the opportunity and don't let it pass them by.

Polster, a Shaker Heights resident and a member of Park Synagogue in Cleveland Heights and Pepper Pike and Congregation Shaarey Tikvah in Beachwood, makes time for volunteering in the community, serving on the boards of the Joseph and Florence Mandel Jewish Day School and the Siegal Lifelong Learning Program at Case Western Reserve University, but he notes that he also has “a pretty important day job” that he balances between volunteering and family commitments.

Polster’s “important day job” is being a U.S. Judge for the Northern District of Ohio, a position he has held since 1998. In addition to his busy caseload, Polster is overseeing more than 1,300 federal lawsuits being brought by communities, including the city of Cleveland, against drug companies and pharmacy chains for their roles in perpetuating the opioid epidemic.

“I have an awesome responsibility,” said Polster. “I took an oath to defend the Constitution of the United States. I feel it keenly every day. My goal is when I finally retire from this job – which I hope won’t be for a long, long time – to pass on to my successor a legal system stronger than the one I inherited. If I do that, I think I’ll have done a pretty good job.”

He said the consolidated lawsuits are among the most challenging “constellation of cases” he’s had in is 20 years as a judge.

“Typically, a lawsuit is about something unpleasant or unfortunate that happened in the past,” he said. “A plaintiff alleging prior wrong doing by the defendant. These cases aren’t so much about the past as the present and the future. I think there are very few people in Ohio that don’t have someone impacted by the opioid crisis. There’s so much addiction, suffering and death.

“To me, there’s no way not to have that front and center and to urge

people – all the parties, public and private – that at the same time they're fighting over the lawsuit, to see if they can take some steps to turn the trajectory of addition and death down, rather than it going up, up, up. So, I think I tried to approach these cases through the lens of my Jewish training and upbringing, that one should try to alleviate suffering."

To help maintain the balance between his profession and his work in the community, he takes a big-picture view of everything.

"I look at my professional and community work together, not compartmentalized," he said. "One of the reasons that I enjoy the community work is because my job as a federal judge is a very lonely job. I enjoy the opportunity to be out in the community working with people. I also think it's good to see a federal judge is just an ordinary person with an extraordinary job. We're ordinary men and women, we just have extraordinary jobs and I think it's good for people to see that. Sometimes I get inspired from my day job and that helps my volunteering and sometimes it's the other way around."

He said in addition to being inspired by his parents to give back at an early age, he is also inspired by his wife of 42 years, attorney Deborah Coleman. He is also inspired by other residents of Cleveland and the work they do.

"Clevelanders are extraordinarily generous with their time and their money," Polster said. "My family goes back five generations in Cleveland. I inherited this and want to pass it on better than I got it."

He said the most rewarding aspect of his time giving back to the community are the friendships he's made with extraordinary men and women he's worked with.

"Plus, the satisfaction of seeing some very worthwhile institutions in our community grow and thrive," Polster added.

He advised young people looking to start giving back to start with something they're passionate about.

"Start with your passion and find an organization in your area that seems to want the kind of help you can give," he said. "Meet a lot of people, learn what they're doing, find out about a lot of organizations, learn about something you're really passionate about. And if you try something that just isn't a good fit, that's okay, because then you can try something else."

– *Ed Carroll*

A little bit more...

Age: 66

Residence: Shaker Heights

Spouse: Deborah Coleman

Synagogue: Park Synagogue and Congregation Shaarey Tikvah

Favorite athlete: Rocky Colavito

Most gratifying job: My current position as U.S. District Judge. I am entrusted with upholding the law and the Constitution of the United States; there is no higher responsibility or honor.

What advice would you give your 14-year-old self: Don't sweat the buck teeth, extra pounds, or social awkwardness.

Favorite vacation: Family trip to Israel to celebrate my becoming a judge.

What do you do in your spare time: Mowing the lawn/yard work; bicycle riding; reading.